

Preliminary Remarks:

In response to the Office Action of January 23, 2006, applicants submit this supplemental response amending the claims pursuant to the comments made by the Examiner in the Communication dated January 23, 2006. The amended claims of this response replace the amended claims filed October 26, 2005 -- all other portions of the October 26 response (amendments to the specification and the drawings) are not being resubmitted. This supplemental response is intended to address the Examiner's concerns regarding applicants' responsiveness to the June 7, 2005 Office Action, namely that amended claim 1 failed to include all of the limitations of claim 16, which had been indicated to be allowable in the previous Office Action. While applicants maintain that the Amendment filed October 26, 2005 was fully responsive to the prior Office Action in that the amendments to claim 1 in fact, did include all of the limitations of claim 16 placed within the body of the claims rather than as an appended "wherein" clause, the alternatively amended claims submitted in this supplemental response are in a form permitting the Office to more easily discern and verify that all of the limitations have been properly incorporated into the claims. Thus, applicants respectfully submit that the amended claims in this supplemental response, taken together with the other amendments filed in the prior response of October 26, 2005, creates a full response to the Office Action of June 7, 2005.

Remarks:

As stated in their prior Amendment, applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's indication (in the prior Office Action) that the subject matter of claims 16-20 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In response to the Examiner's indication, applicants have amended independent claim 1 to include the limitations of dependent claim 16. Claim 15 has been amended in response to the newly incorporated limitations of claim 16. Further, claims 17 and 18 have been amended to depend from claim 1. Applicants have also endeavored to incorporate what they understand to be the allowable subject matter into the other independent claim, claim 21.

Thus, both claims 1 and 21 recite an introducer having an anterograde sheath mounted over an endoluminal device (or portion of a multi-part device) and attached to the distal tip of a shaft extending axially through the device and further includes anchoring means. The method steps of claim 1 recite anchoring the proximal end of the portion prior to step b(3) and releasing it prior to or concurrently with step b(4). The apparatus claim of claim 21 recites anchoring means for anchoring the proximal end of the second device while deploying the device from the

proximal end to the distal end (analogous to claim 1, step b(3)) and for releasing the proximal end prior to or concurrently with removing the second introducer (analogous to claim 1, step b(4)). Thus, there should be no question that these limitations follow the reasons for the indication of allowable subject matter in the office action dated June 27, 2005. Should the Examiner disagree, the applicant respectfully requests a telephone interview to discuss any perceived shortcomings.

Applicants have cancelled claims 2, 13, 14, and 16, and all other claims are directly or indirectly dependent from claims 1 or 21. Accordingly, all of the claims should now be considered allowable.

Conclusion:

For the foregoing reasons, applicants believe the pending application to be in condition for allowance. Early and favorable notification to this effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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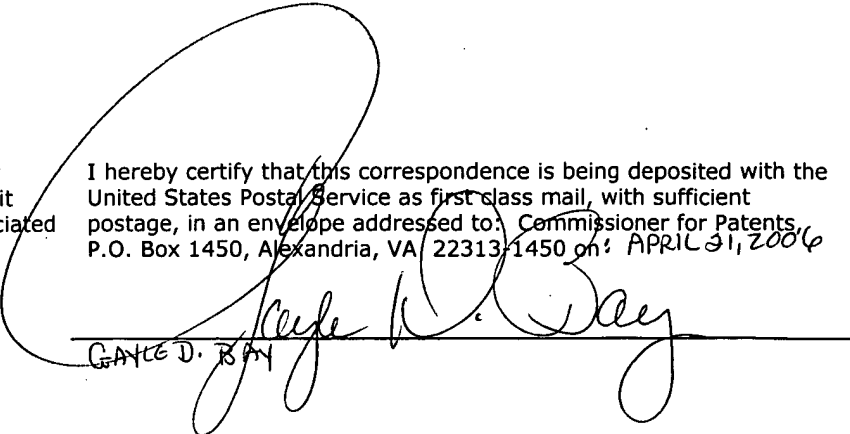
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Dated:

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The Commissioner for Patents is hereby authorized to charge payment to Deposit Account No. **18-0350** of any fees associated with this communication.

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail, with sufficient postage, in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on: **APRIL 21, 2006**


Gayle D. Ryan